

Minutes for the August 2, 2016 meeting

Committee members in attendance

Kimberly Brandt (serving as Chair for the meeting)
Bif Browning
Ashley Pennington
Alan Pressman
Ann Robinson
Noah Smock
Bonnie Sorak

Ex-officio members / others agencies in attendance

Alan Robinson, Chief, Office of Strategy and Performance Management, DPW
Kimberly Grove, Chief, Office of Compliance and Laboratories, DPW
Marcia Collins, Chief of Legislative Affairs, DPW
Dana Cooper, Chief of Legal and Regulatory Affairs, DPW
Kristyn Oldendorf, Office of Legislative Affairs, DPW
Denise Caldwell, Department of Recreation and Parks
Michael Wilmore, Department of Transportation
Rachel Baye, WYPR
Dan Spack, Ecologix Group
Laura Wheaton, Neighborhood Design Center

Meeting Minutes

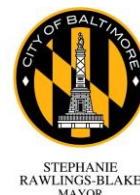
The meeting started at 6:05pm, with acting chair Kimberly Golden-Brandt asking SWAC members to introduce themselves.

Stormwater Tour

SWAC members have expressed interest in touring of stormwater facilities. Kimberly Grove presented various options, with members most interested in bioretention facilities, both public and private examples. Ms. Grove suggested a tour of 2 to 3 hours during the daytime, with an initial focus on projects on the west side of the City. She suggested the end of September might be the best time. If enough members wish to take the tour, DPW would see about getting a van to transport everyone from site to site. Staff will follow up with some recommended days and a proposed itinerary.

Modified Consent Decree

Dana Cooper began her presentation by providing an overview of the difference between Combined vs Separate Systems. The City's sanitary sewer system was constructed to be separate from the storm drain system. Some areas of the City had small pockets of combined sanitary and storm drains, but these were in annexed areas and were corrected back in the 1990s. The City occasionally discovers interconnections done either in error or some time ago that need to be corrected. As a result, the overflows of sewage from the City's system occur either due to an obstruction in the system (dry weather overflow) or due to rainwater getting into the pipes through cracks or other means (wet weather overflow). These are called sanitary sewer overflows, or SSOs, and are the focus of the City's Consent Decree.. We knew of 62 structured overflows built many years ago (an accepted practice at the time) to relieve pipes that were filled to capacity, usually during rain events. The EPA required the City to close off these structured overflows as one of the first initiatives of the Consent Decree, even though the City did not have time to fix the causes of the overflows, which unfortunately caused pressure in other parts of system. The Consent Decree requires the City to rehabilitate and to increase capacity of its system, with a deadline of January 1, 2016. While significant rehabilitation projects went forward, the projects which address capacity issues



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were not completed by the deadline for many reasons. For instance, many pipes were installed a long time ago and we don't know condition until something bad happens. So we had to do a study, put in devices to measure flow, do videos, etc. in order to identify the problems and come up with plan to fix them. These plans had to be approved by both EPA and MDE.

The City was in discussions with EPA, MDE and DOJ for several years before the modified Consent Decree was submitted to the court for consideration. We are in public comment period, with the deadline being August 8. The document is on the Department of Justice (DOJ) website. Comments should be sent directly to DOJ. When the comment period ends, the federal government will respond to the comments, make a decision on whether to further modify the consent decree or ask the court to enter it as is.

Basement backups have been in the press; this is a terrible issue and something that DPW is working on independent of the Consent Decree. Some say this should be dealt with in Consent Decree; which DPW is considering.

When our Consent Decree came out, it was one of first in country. With 14 years of hindsight, it is clear that modifications are necessary. Comments received through the public comment process so far have been a mix, from engineering groups, homeowners, and environmental groups like Blue Water Baltimore who would like to be a party to the Consent Decree.

A SWAC member asked how DPW is handling basement backups?

Dana answered that everything we're doing under the Consent Decree will help. When we fix and clean pipes, sewage can flow freely and not back up into basements. This includes maintenance issues like tree roots and fats, oils, and grease (FOG). Also, education and outreach is needed to help people address problems that may be on their property. While the City owns the lateral (the pipe which connects the property owner's pipe to the public sewer pipe) it is not responsible for the portion of the lateral on private property. People need to be aware that their side of the pipe may be old and is causing issues, and may need to be repaired or replaced. DPW is doing proactive inspections and maintenance throughout the city to inspect laterals and, where needed, repair and place the laterals on a routine maintenance schedule.

SWAC: What is being done to educate residents about lateral maintenance?

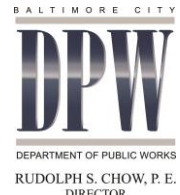
For the last couple of years the City has offered a Homeserve warranty program. Many people have taken advantage of this program and saved money in repairs. DPW has also provided education and outreach on the FOG program, and has an inspection and enforcement program for restaurants regarding FOG.

SWAC: Does the city inspect the private side when checking the public side?

Yes, we do so when we can, depending on the type of connection, whether there is a clean out, etc. If we see a problem on the private side, we alert the homeowner.

Dana next described the Plan for the Modified Consent Decree, which includes two steps: 1) Fix it, and 2) Make it bigger (increase capacity).

DPW knows where the problems are since study is complete, so now we are fixing the problems. The largest is the Back River Headworks project. We found that there is huge hydraulic restriction for the sewage to get into the plant. The pipe that feeds into the plant is offset from the plant by about 5 feet. This is no easy fix. We are building a massive pumping station to pump sewage up into plant, which will free up a huge amount of capacity in the system. In order to better handle the cost of the project and ensure that it is done as quickly as possible, the City is using a "construction manager at risk" method of project delivery. While this project delivery method is used with success in many places, it is new to Baltimore. The new pumping station will be online by January 1, 2021. Back River is the largest Waste Water Treatment Plant in the state, treating both Baltimore City and Baltimore County wastewater (which does not have its own treatment plant). Many changes have



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occurred in the hundred years since the plant was built. In addition to the Headworks DPW is constructing other projects to upgrade the facility, including installing state of the art technology to do Enhanced Nutrient Removal for protection of the health of the Bay. DPW offers tours at the treatment plants if SWAC is interested.

Once we fix the problems (Step 1), then we move onto Step 2 - increase capacity.

A computer model of the entire sewer system was created so that various improvements could be tested under different flow scenarios. Sizing of the system to achieve a 5 year level of protection (no overflows under a five year storm) for whole city and a 10 year level of protection (from overflows under a 10-year storm) in sensitive areas was the plan that was presented to EPA. Sensitive areas include locations near hospitals, daycare centers, schools, streams; making most of city needing the higher level of protection. After phase one is completed, the system improvements will be studied to make sure it's working as expected

SWAC: How does DPW account for the increase in capacity needed by new developments?

In the 1950s we had the greatest level of capacity; larger population, large industrial users, and more water used by customers. Now we have a smaller population using low flow toilets and other efficient fixtures that use less water. This means most of the main part of the sewer system is sized sufficiently, the City just has to make sure that clear water does not infiltrate into the system during wet weather. Every new development or rehabilitated structure goes through a process whereby the usage of the development or structure is estimated based on its use and both the water and wastewater systems are checked to be certain that the system can provide sufficient water and has sufficient capacity to accept the wastewater.

SWAC: With a smaller population, how are we paying for all this?

Funding for the Consent Decree primarily comes from sewer rates, with some of the money coming from Baltimore County, including cost sharing with them for large projects.

The City is also aggressively addressing Sanitary Discharges of Unknown Origins (SDUOs). DPW uses advanced methodology to track down these discharges when it's not obvious where the sewage is coming from. Often these are a result of illegal connections, such as a building connecting a sewage line to the storm drain rather than the sewer drain.

The Modified Consent Decree as has new public information, education and outreach requirements as well as an annual public forum and posting requirements. Finally, construction tracked in Envista so will be on record where improvements are made.

SWAC Term Expirations

The Stormwater Advisory Committee is entering its two year mark, which means the end of the original SWAC members' two year terms in November. Several members have said they'll be stepping down when their two years are up. DPW is looking for fresh voices and ideas, and getting new people involved. Staff asked that if current members are interested in staying on the SWAC, they should express that interest soon. Five members have said they are leaving and the 3 newest members would continue. If members who are leaving have someone to recommend, they should email Alan Robinson. We will be announcing an application and resume process, but are also looking for recommendations from SWAC members.

Additionally, we are looking for ways to improve the Committee and will be scheduling a separate time to discuss this.

Open Discussion / Adjournment

SWAC members or audience members did not have any items to discuss, so the meeting was adjourned at 7:05pm. Next meeting date is November 1, 2016, at the Planning Department (417 E. Fayette Street, 8th Floor).

